



## Canada

### GOVERNMENT

## Nunavut: Canada's Newest Territory

*On April 1, 1999, after a 28-year quest, the territory of Nunavut became a reality for Canada's Inuit. The creation of Nunavut gives hope to native peoples all over the world who seek a self-governing homeland. Just before the landmark day, a Canadian journalist took a look at the territory that was about to be born.*

Peter Ernerk was on the phone from Iqaluit, dealing in facts and figures about Nunavut, when he stopped and said, "Why don't I just send you an e-mail?" And then he stopped again and said, "You know, sometimes I'm amazed. Forty years ago I was living in an igloo. Now I'm sending e-mails."

Ernerk's own experiences offer a context for understanding the latest development in the lives of the Inuit of the eastern Canadian Arctic: the birth . . . of the territory of Nunavut. Changes have come dizzyingly fast to the people in this stern and lovely world. A century ago, they were living in a stone age, hunting seals and caribou with weapons of rock or bone. Four decades or so ago, they left hunting camps and semi-nomadic lives for settlements. . . . Now, with the creation of Nunavut, they will govern one-fifth of the Canadian landmass. . . .

The challenges are considerable. Nunavut will be a huge territory: 60 percent of today's Northwest Territories including most of the Canadian Arctic islands. It is a land of tundra and mountains, of tiny shoreside hamlets and extensive mineral resources. . . . The 27,219 people—85 percent Inuit and, with 56 percent under 25 years of age, the youngest population in Canada—are scattered in 28 communities, most vast distances apart.

Nunavut has two facets: the land claim settlement . . . and the creation of a new territory. . . . The land claim settlement—largest in Canada—gives the Inuit ownership of 350,000 square kilometers [135,000 square miles] of land (including subsurface minerals in a carefully selected 10 percent of that) and compensation from the federal government of \$1.148 billion over 14 years (held in a trust with the interest used to finance business, student scholarships and support for hunters).

The Inuit also gain a share of resource royalties, hunting rights and a greater role in managing the land and protecting the environment. In exchange, they signed away future claims to aboriginal rights and title to all remaining lands and water in Nunavut. . . .

Canadian Inuit lived generally beyond the influence of southern society until the shift to settlement living in the 1950s and 1960s, when the Canadian government began providing health care, housing and education. Many parents' desire for their children to learn to read and write in English led to their move from the land into settlements. The launch of the Anik A-1

satellite in 1972 brought television—CBC and Hockey Night in Canada—to the Arctic and played no small role in the precipitous [sharp] decline in the use of Inuktitut [the Inuit language]. The demise [end] of the sealskin industry in the 1970s eliminated a traditional occupation. . . .

But the incursion [invasion] of southern culture brought some benefits. Aside from the practical—rifles and outboards, radios and telephones—there were new social and political concepts: almost immediately, calls for an Inuit territory in the eastern Canadian Arctic were heard. . . . The federal government agreed to an eventual [creation of an Inuit territory] on the condition that all land claims be settled. . . .

Nunavut’s economic future is firmly linked to its renewable and non-renewable natural resources—mining and petroleum development, commercial fishing and hunting, and eco-tourism. The land and water that once sustained a semi-nomadic society are now expected to sustain the modern Nunavut economy: 80 percent of the territory’s known mineral reserves—copper, lead, zinc, gold and silver—are on Inuit-owned land.

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From: “Nunavut: Up and Running” (retitled “Nunavut: Canada’s Newest Territory”) by Dane Lanken and Mary Vincent from *Canadian Geographic*, January-February 1999. Copyright ©1999 by the **Royal Canadian Geographical Society**. Reprinted by permission of the publisher.

**Understanding What You Read** After you have finished reading the selection, answer the following questions.

1. How did Hockey Night in Canada help lead to the creation on Nunavut?

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2. What did the Inuit have to give up to gain the government’s agreement to Nunavut? Why is its creation so significant for the Inuit?

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**Activity**

Imagine that you have been hired by the Inuit to develop tourism. Research Nunavut and create a brochure to promote eco-tourism in the territory.

region or community at large can restrict the options that the landholder has regarding what to do with his or her property.

### **Reading 12**

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1. flat, expansive, hot, and semiarid with a ranching economy
2. That they drive 80 miles across the ranch to reach the ranch house, and that Bick did not think 90 miles was far for his family to come, suggests that Texans perceive “reasonable” distances as greater than do people who live in smaller states.

### **Reading 13**

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1. There are no schools for them to attend on the islands where they live.
2. junior high students; that school is located on Mayne Island, which is closer than Salt Spring Islands, location of the high school.
3. Some students are not able to participate in extracurricular activities because of the boat schedule and the amount of time required for the commute.
4. boarding on the school island during the school week

### **Reading 14**

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1. Answers will vary but should recognize that it was part of the infusion of southern Canada’s culture into Inuit society. Along with television and other practical benefits came social and political ideas, one of which was self-determination.
2. They had to give up all aboriginal claims to any other lands. Answers about significance will vary, but students should note that not only will the Inuit govern the territory themselves, but it comprises about a fifth of Canada’s landmass.

### **Reading 15**

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1. political stability, land reform, development of distribution of oil wealth, paved roads, schools, economic reforms, NAFTA

2. by rigging elections, buying loyalty with local improvement projects, and suppressing freedom of speech and the press
3. The government’s slow and inefficient response after a 1985 earthquake caused Mexicans to lose faith in its ability to take care of them.

### **Reading 16**

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1. Cars and factories emit pollutants into the air, which are then trapped in the city by the mountains that surround it.
2. Dried fecal matter from the city’s million stray dogs is blown into the air to mix with other suspended particles and chemical pollutants.
3. Elimination of leaded gasoline, and various motor vehicle laws have reduced some pollutant levels. Reforestation has reduced air-borne soil particles, but more work is needed in this area, along with better enforcement of existing dog and motor vehicle laws and conversion to natural gas.

### **Reading 17**

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1. by the colors and patterns of the clothing they wear
2. Spanish Guatemalans live in the cities, are Roman Catholic, and follow the latest fashion and entertainment trends. The Maya live in highland villages, retain their own gods, speak their own languages, wear traditional clothing, and follow centuries-old customs.
3. He will likely walk. That he is draining the blood from the sheep to make it lighter suggests this. His walk could range up to 12 miles.
4. Christian saints guide them in family life and the Mayan gods guide them in farming and other work.

### **Reading 18**

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1. Its activity has caused the south part of Montserrat to be evacuated, concentrating the population on the sparsely populated